BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU

BANNED in America

"I think, and have thought ever since the war began, in 1936 or thereabouts, that our cause is the better, but we have to keep on making it the better, which involves constant criticism.

Yours sincerely,
Geo. Orwell"

Orwell wrote this in a letter to Noel Willmott 3 years before he penned 1984, the now iconic dystopian novel birthed from the chaos of The Second World War. The totalitarian world within 1984 has come to be one of literature’s most vivid warnings against bureaucratic suppression of individual life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. 1984’s Oceania and our own United States of 2016 draw very strong parallels, that make Orwell’s 70-year-old warning hauntingly omnipresent.

With the extradition of Edward Snowden and the revoking of his passport and American citizenship, we see the consequences of speaking truth against the State. It is now more clear than ever that the NSA PRISM program is a calculated effort on behalf of the U.S. government:

“We know that PRISM is a system the NSA uses to gain access to the private communications... We know that access is governed by Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which was enacted in 2001. Director of National Intelligence James Clapper tells the Senate PRISM’s existence is a “mistaken” interpretation of Section 702. The NSA has beenagying PRISM directly from the servers” of Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook and other online companies. - Washington Post, June 13th, 2013

Snowden was right. Like Winston Smith of the authoritarian Oceania in 1984, Snowden told the truth in the face of a State that was usurping the trust of its citizens to work for them instead of against them.

As Trumpism rears its ugly (white, sexist, racist) head across what’s left of The Republican Party during this 2016 Presidential election, literal violence against anything different has become a core value in the frosted American right. Trump rallies are more than just a political show; they’re an exercise in suppression of protest and a celebration of blind nationalism — echoing scenes of the Two Minutes Hate, where Hillary’s face beams down from the screen.

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This zine was born out of a project sponsored by the Carnegie Center in Lexington, Kentucky, as a part of their Carnegie Classics series. Artists submitted work that reflected a modern rethinking of 1984. Of course we wanted to take this opportunity to tease out the social and cultural implications of events happening this year—particularly the Presidential election. More broadly though, we wanted to write this zine as a salute to the rabble rousers, big and small, of our time — whether they be writers of Queer Young Adult literature or folks selling raw milk.

It’s important here that we draw a certain distinction between ultimate libertarianism and freedom of speech. We both think stale gruel is cruel and violent, and there’s a damn fine reason why it is banned in the United States. But to bring it back to Orwell’s letter, making our cause the better requires constant criticism. Perhaps it’s okay that we have guidelines for obscenity on the radio and regulations for water quality; but without public discourse on why these are needed, they’ve just rules. (And really boring ones, too.)

Thanks for reading. Xoxo

Meredith

&

Chuck C.
One of these revolutionary ideas that's been vigorously suppressed for virtually EVER is the sexual woman. Fanny Hill: Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure was one of the first novels of the English language to be banned from circulation, and is considered to be the first English prose pornography.

Published in London in 1748, Fanny Hill told the tale of a young woman's unconventional journey towards middle-class respectability. But those folks in overcoats and wigs (probably) in their ivory towers decided that the public was not ready to read about the boudoirs and brothels of Augustan England -- even though many already knew plenty about them already ifyouknowwhatimsayin -- and its author, John Cleland, was arrested a year after its publication for "corrupting the King's subjects." The novel's sexual exploits and erotic fantasies quickly made it not only one of the most notorious pieces of literature in the English language, but a modern byword for the battle of censorship of erotica.

As if this had been the signal agreed on for pulling off all their cloaths, a scheme which the heat of the season perfectly favoured, Polly began to draw her pins, and as she had no stays to unlace, she was in a trice, with her gallant's officious assistance, undress'd to all but her shift.

Discourse about erotica censorship is still lively and complex today. But even young adult literature that doesn't actually seem too seedy is a target of censorship in schools everywhere. Like our very own commonwealth! Here's just a few of many hotly debated books banned for being sexually explicit.

Looking for Alaska, John Green
In 2016, a school in Marion County, Kentucky, banned this young adult novel from their curriculum after a parent filed a formal complaint with the school, citing it as "FITFLH." The parent suggested that the book encourages students "to experiment with pornography, sex, drugs, alcohol, and profanity." Oh also she didn't read the entire book.

Ulysses, James Joyce
The public ran into trouble with its printing of the 13th chapter, entitled "Nausicaa," due to its use of profanity and depiction of masturbation. The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice waged a successful campaign to keep it out of the United States (a decision not reversed until 1933). New York postal officials censored and burned hundreds of copies of the magazine. During its 11-year ban, the book was smuggled into the country and sold at high prices by bootleggers.

Lady Chatterly's Lover, D.H. Lawrence
This book garnered instant infamy for its graphic descriptions of adulterous sex and its inclusion of unprintable words. It was the subject of obscenity trials in Britain, Japan, and India; it was banned in the United States and Canada. Australia had the unique distinction of banning not only the novel itself, but the book written about its obscenity trial in Britain.
"Banned Books" in the 21st Century: Schools and Libraries

Hundreds of books are either removed or challenged in schools and libraries in the United States every year. According to the American Library Association (ALA), there were at least 311 in 2014. ALA estimates that 70 to 80 percent are never reported.

A challenge is defined as a formal, written complaint, filed with a library or school requesting that materials be removed because of content or appropriateness.

SURPRISE! Most of the time, "appropriateness," or lack thereof, has to do with sexual content.

One novel that's been hotly contested in schools for years is Toni Morrison's Beloved. The latest instance of this was in 2016, when it was challenged, but retained as an optional summer reading choice in the Satellite Beach (FL) High School Advanced Placement classes. A parent admitted not having read the entire book when he addressed the committee in September, but wanted the book banned because of what he called

"porn content." It was also challenged on the Fairfax County (VA) senior English reading list by a parent claiming "the book includes scenes of violent sex, including a gang rape, and was too graphic and extreme for teenagers." The controversy led to legislation (House Bill 516) that calls for the Virginia Department of Education to create a policy that notifies parents of the content and then allows them to review the materials.

(BTW - The novel is inspired by the story of an African-American slave, Margaret Garner, who escaped slavery in Kentucky in late January 1856 by fleeing to Ohio, a free state.)

aw naw
HELL NAW

Narendra Modi - Prime Minister of India & former Chief Minister of Gujarat. In 2005, Modi was denied a diplomatic A-2 visa to the United States. In addition, the B-1/B-2 visa that had previously been granted to him was revoked, under a section of the Immigration and Nationality Act which makes any foreign government official who was responsible or "directly carried out at any time, particularly severe violations of religious freedom" ineligible for the visa.

Modi remains the only person ever to be banned to travel to the United States of America under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) provision of US Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

In 2012, A Special Investigation Team (SIT) appointed by the Indian Supreme Court found no "prosecutable evidence" against Modi and cleared him of all charges. The US visa issue morphed into a diplomatic hurdle in bilateral India-United States relations when Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister of India in 2014. Modi, however, was allowed to visit the US in September 2014 after becoming the Prime Minister of India.
Boy George (real name George O'Dowd) was denied a visa in 2008 by US immigration officials while facing trial in the UK in November of that year. The singer had been ordered to clean the streets of New York as community service in 2006 after pleading guilty to falsely reporting a burglary.

An official statement from his management said: "At the moment, Boy George cannot come to the United States of America because he has been refused permission to enter by the US Administration."

O'Dowd was finally allowed entry to the U.S. in 2014.
Edward Snowden, who is facing espionage charges for leaking classified documents on National Security Agency surveillance programs, had his U.S. passport revoked before he boarded a flight for Russia, the Associated Press reports.

"Persons wanted on felony charges, such as Mr. Snowden, should not be allowed to proceed in any further international travel, other than is necessary to return him to the United States."

Hong Kong authorities said they notified the U.S. that Snowden had boarded a flight to Russia and rejected an extradition request from the U.S. government that failed to meet their standards.

"The Obama administration has now adopted the strategy of using citizenship as a weapon. Although I am convicted of nothing, it has unilaterally revoked my passport, leaving me a stateless person. Without any judicial order, the administration now seeks to stop me from exercising a basic right! A right that belongs to everybody. The right to seek asylum."

"While the public has cried out support of my shining a light on this secret system of injustice, the Government of the United States of America responded with an extrajudicial man-hunt costing me my family, my freedom to travel, and my right to live peacefully without fear of illegal aggression."

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The increase in popularity of Japanese beef in the United States has led to the creation of "Kobe-style" beef, taken from domestically raised Wagyu crossed with Angus cattle, to meet the demand. Farms in the United States and Britain have attempted to replicate the Kobe traditions. From the first Wagyu cattle imported in the 1970s, 150 US ranches now raise "tens of thousands of Wagyu cattle"

Chuck C. side note: Matsuza Beef is really the best Japan has to offer.

IMPORTS of traditional Scottish haggis have been banned in the United States since 1921. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has long objected to one of the key ingredients in haggis – sheep's lung. No food for human consumption, whether made locally in the USA or imported from overseas, can contain sheep's lung.
OTHER BANNED FOOD ITEMS:

To produce "foie gras" (the French term means "fatty liver"), workers ram pipes down the throats of male ducks twice each day, pumping up to 2.2 pounds of grain and fat into their stomachs, or geometric three times a day, up to 4 pounds daily, in a process known as "gavage." The California Health and Safety Code, enacted in 2004, prohibits "force feed[i]ng] a bird for the purpose of enlarging the bird's liver beyond normal size" and the sale of products that are a result of this process. On January 7th, 2015, Judge Stephen V. Wilson held that the California law was preempted by the federal Poultry Products Inspection Act, and overturned the ban. As of February 2015, the repeal case is on appeal.

Unpasteurized milk

Banned in: Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington, DC, West Virginia

The debate over this stuff has its own Wikipedia page, and has been raging ever since German chemist Franz von Soxhlet first suggested that milk be pasteurized. Some scholars believe raw milk to have intrinsic health benefits, while people against it believe it to be totally gross and, evidently, responsible for 25% of food and water contamination in the year 1938 alone.

Shark fins

Banned in: California, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, New York, Oregon, Washington

This is another one of those disturbing-process bans, as the sharks in question are stripped of their dorsal fins and discarded into the ocean, which effectively kills them, as they are no longer able to swim. Their fins are then pared down, bleached, and made into a soup.

Blood

Banned in: Louisiana

The ritualistic consumption of blood -- be it animal or human -- is illegal in Louisiana, leading many to wonder how common it was to drink blood before the ban.

FUGU

Japanese puffer fish is a delicacy to fans of sushi, where it is called "fugu," but it is largely banned in the U.S. and, where permitted, it can only be served by those with a license. While many consider the fish delicious, the puffer fish's skin and organs contain a poisonous toxin called tetrodotoxin. In humans, tetrodotoxin can lead to paralysis or even death by asphyxiation.

TOP TEN CHALLENGED BOOKS OF 2015

1) Looking for Alaska. John Green: sexually explicit, unsuiting for age group
2) Fifty Shades of Grey. E.L. James: "poorly written" & "teenagers will want to try it"
3) I Am Jazz. Jessica Herthel & Jazz Jennings. Jazz Jennings was diagnosed with gender dysphoria in childhood at age 4, making her one of the youngest publicly documented people identified as gender dysphoric. Her parents decided to recognize her as a girl by her 5th birthday. She has been speaking out on transgender issues ever since, and I Am Jazz is her story of growing up trans. Aside from being challenged for overt transphobic reasons, there are also challenges to the book that describe it as "inaccurate," which is a whole new upset level of invalidating someone's experience.
4) Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out. Susan Kuklin: "anti-family" whatever the heck that means?
5) The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time. Mark Haddon: "profanity and atheism"
6) The Holy Bible, The Lord. No reasons listed but possible complaints include religious propaganda, sexually explicit, not suited for age group, graphic depictions of slavery, etc.
7) Fun Home. Alison Bechdel: graphic memoir. "Dysfunctional"
8) Habibi. Craig Thompson: "unsuitable for age group"
9) Nazeen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan. Janette Winter. This book is often challenged for "religious viewpoint." But here's the plot summary according to the publisher: "In despair, her grandmother risks everything to enroll Nazeen in a secret school for girls, with a devoted teacher, a new friend, and the worlds she discovers in books to help her draw Nazeen out of her shell of sadness? based on a true story from Afghanistan, this inspiring book will touch readers deeply as it affirms both the life-changing power of education and the healing power of love."
10) Two Boys Kissing. David Levithan: "condemns public displays of affection"
Hit Man: A Technical Manual for Independent Contractors is a book written under the pseudonym Rex Feral and published by Paladin Press in 1983. Paladin Press owner Pedger Lund claimed that the book started as a detailed crime novel written by a Florida housewife, and that the format was later changed to appeal to Paladin’s reader base accustomed to the publisher’s non-fiction books on military, survivalist, weapons and similar topics. The book portrays itself as a how-to manual on starting a career as a hit man.

In 1993, a triple murder was committed in Montgomery County, Maryland, by a man who claimed to have used the book as his guide. In November 1997, a U.S. appeals court ruled 3-0 that Hit Man was not protected by the free speech/free press clause of the First Amendment and thus Paladin Enterprises could be held liable for a triple murder committed by one of its readers.

"Only time will tell how much damage this lawsuit has done to the First Amendment, which has always been the hallmark of American freedoms," commented Paladin Press, which recently withdrew Hit Man from its catalogue, "and the once-vaunted ‘marketplace of ideas’ it has encouraged and protected from censors of all persuasions."

In 1971, Marvin Miller, an owner/operator of a California mail-order business specializing in pornographic films and books, sent out an advertisement brochure that graphically depicted sexual activity between men and women. One man who received the mailer called the police, and what ensued was a landmark case in the US Supreme Court. The court redefined its definition of obscenity from that of "utterly without socially redeeming value" to that which lacks "serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value." It is now referred to as the Three-prong standard or the Miller test:

- Whether "the average person, applying contemporary community standards", would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest
- Whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct or excretory functions specifically defined by applicable state law
- Whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

The work is considered obscene only if all three conditions are satisfied.

Resources on censorship and sensibility:

National Coalition Against Censorship
http://ncac.org/

Human Rights Watch
https://www.hrw.org/

Committee to Protect Journalists
https://www.cpj.org/

Carnegie Center for the Arts - Lexington
http://carnegiecenterlex.org/

World Day Against Cyber Censorship is an online event held each year on March 12 to rally support for a single, unrestricted Internet that is accessible to all and to draw attention to the ways that governments around the world are deterring and censoring free speech online.

Reporters Without Borders
https://rsf.org/en/ranking

Home of World Press Freedom Index:
(1. Finland 8.59 / 46 United States 22.49)
By: CHUCK CLENNEY AND MEREDITH WADDINGTON
LEXINGTON, KY 2010